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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/622,165

07/17/2003

Rolf Schaller

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11/15/2006

EXAMINER

DAIMLERCHRYSLER INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL CORPORATION

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CIMS 483-02-19

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ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1745

DATE MAILED: 11/15/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Office Action Summary
for Applications
Under Accelerated Examination**

Application No.

10/622,165

Applicant(s)

SCHALLER ET AL.

Examiner

Mark Ruthkosky

Art Unit

1745

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Since this application has been granted special status under the accelerated examination program,
**NO extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be permitted and a SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR
REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE:**

ONE MONTH OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER,
FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION – if this is a non-final action or a *Quayle* action.
(Examiner: For **FINAL** actions, please use PTOL-326.)

The objective of the accelerated examination program is to complete the examination of an application within twelve months from the filing date of the application. Any reply must be filed electronically via EFS-Web so that the papers will be expeditiously processed and considered. If the reply is not filed electronically via EFS-Web, the final disposition of the application may occur later than twelve months from the filing of the application.

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 September 2006.
2) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 3) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are pending in the application.
3a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
4) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are rejected.
6) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 8) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
9) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
10) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 11) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 9/6/2006 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, because the specification, while being enabling for "incorporating the cathode exhaust line into an outer housing of the fuel cell or other component", does not reasonably provide enablement for "a heat exchanger coupled to the fuel cell for receiving waste heat from the housing of a fuel cell." The specification does not enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the invention commensurate in scope with these claims. Further, the amendment is objected to under 35 U.S.C. 132(a) because it introduces new matter into the disclosure. 35 U.S.C. 132(a) states that no amendment shall introduce new matter into the disclosure of the invention. The added material which is not supported by the original disclosure

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is as follows: "a heat exchanger coupled to the fuel cell for receiving waste heat from the housing of a fuel cell." With regard to the housing, the instant specification only indicates, "incorporating the cathode exhaust line into an outer housing of the fuel cell or other component." Applicant is required to cancel the new matter in the reply to this Office Action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Xu (US 6,551,732.)

The instant claims are to a fuel cell system comprising a fuel cell having a housing enclosing an anode chamber, a proton exchange membrane and a cathode chamber, the cathode chamber being separated from the anode chamber by the proton exchange membrane, the housing adapted to transfer waste heat of the fuel cell; a cathode supply line coupled to a supply of compressed oxygen-containing gas and to the cathode chamber; a fuel supply coupled to the anode chamber; a cathode exhaust gas line; a heat exchanger coupled to the fuel cell for receiving waste heat from the housing of the fuel cell; and an expansion turbine, the cathode

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exhaust gas line fluidly connecting the cathode chamber and the expansion turbine, the heat exchanger being thermally coupled to the cathode exhaust gas line between the cathode chamber and the expansion turbine, whereby the heat exchanger transfers heat energy from the fuel cell to cathode exhaust gas flowing through the cathode exhaust gas line. With regard to the limitation “a heat exchanger coupled to the fuel cell for receiving waste heat from the housing of the fuel cell”, a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention, such as “for receiving” has been considered but is not given patentable weight. The heat exchanger is capable of receiving waste heat from the housing of the fuel cell.

Xu (US 6,551,732) teaches a fuel cell system comprising a fuel cell having a housing enclosing an anode chamber, a proton exchange membrane and a cathode chamber, the cathode chamber being separated from the anode chamber by the proton exchange membrane; a cathode supply line coupled to a supply of compressed oxygen-containing gas and to the cathode chamber; a fuel supply coupled to the anode chamber; a cathode exhaust gas line; a heat exchanger coupled to the fuel cell for receiving waste heat of the fuel cell; and an expansion turbine (cols. 5-6 and figure 1.) The casing inherently transfers heat to the ambient. A combustor is connected to the cathode exhaust line to exchange the combusted heat and direct the cathode exhaust to the expansion turbine. The cathode exhaust gas line fluidly connects the cathode chamber and the expansion turbine with the heat exchanger being thermally coupled to the cathode exhaust gas line between the cathode chamber and the expansion turbine. The heat exchanger transfers heat energy from the fuel cell to cathode exhaust gas flowing through the cathode exhaust gas line.

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Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Cownden et al. (US 6,316,134.)

Cownden et al. (US 6,316,134) teaches a fuel cell system comprising a fuel cell having a housing enclosing an anode chamber, a proton exchange membrane and a cathode chamber, the cathode chamber being separated from the anode chamber by the proton exchange membrane, the housing adapted to transfer waste heat of the fuel cell; a cathode supply line coupled to a supply of compressed oxygen-containing gas and to the cathode chamber; a fuel supply coupled to the anode chamber; a cathode exhaust gas line; a heat exchanger coupled to the fuel cell for receiving waste heat of the fuel cell; and an expansion turbine, the cathode exhaust gas line fluidly connecting the cathode chamber and the expansion turbine, the heat exchanger being thermally coupled to the cathode exhaust gas line between the cathode chamber and the expansion turbine, whereby the heat exchanger transfers heat energy from the fuel cell to cathode exhaust gas flowing through the cathode exhaust gas line (claims, col. 17, line 45 to col. 18, line 55.) The cathode exhaust stream is advantageously used as a heat transfer fluid to assist in the thermal management of a fuel cell. Water in the cathode exhaust is condensed at low temperature and is removed through a water separator. The water is use to for reforming fuel and heat exchange. The cathode exhaust is used in an expansion turbine (col. 17, lines 45-end.) With regard to the limitation “a heat exchanger coupled to the fuel cell for receiving waste heat from the housing of the fuel cell”, a recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention, such as “for receiving” has been considered but is not given patentable weight. The heat exchanger is capable of receiving waste heat from the housing of the fuel cell. Thus, the claims are anticipated.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Xu (US 6,551,732) in view of Cownden et al. (US 6,316,134.)

The teachings of Xu (US 6,551,732) have been presented. The Xu (US 6,551,732) reference does not teach a cathode exhaust cooler and water separator connected between the cathode chamber and the heat exchanger. Cownden et al. (US 6,316,134,) however, teaches a PEM fuel cell with an anode chamber, a cathode chamber and a polymer electrolyte (claims, col. 17, line 45 to col. 18, line 55.) The cathode exhaust stream is advantageously used as a heat transfer fluid to assist in the thermal management of a fuel cell. Water in the cathode exhaust is condensed at low temperature and is removed through a water separator. The water is use to for reforming fuel and heat exchange. The cathode exhaust is used in an expansion turbine (col. 17, lines 45-end.) It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include a cathode exhaust cooler and water separator connected between the cathode chamber and the heat exchanger of Xu in order to accumulate water for the reforming process taught in both references. The skilled artesian would employ the excess water of Xu in order to reform a fuel source as taught in Cownden et al. (US 6,316,134.) The artesian would have found the claimed invention to be obvious in light of the teachings of the references.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 4/13/2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

With regard to the limitation "a heat exchanger coupled to the fuel cell for receiving waste heat from the housing of the fuel cell", the recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention, such as "for receiving" has been considered but is not given patentable weight as noted in the rejection.

With regard to the Xu reference, as applied, applicant argues that Xu does not teach "using fuel cell produced waste heat to add heat to the cathode exhaust via a heat-exchanger." This is not persuasive. Applicant has no argument that the fuel cell reactions are known to be exothermic and generate excess heat. The anode fuel is taught in the reference to be heated to an elevated temperature (col. 5, lines 27-67 and col. 7, lines 1-20.) This heat exits the fuel cell via exhaust lines to a heat-exchanger. The excess hydrogen from the anode exhaust is burned in a combustor with the cathode exhaust and the resulting, heated, cathode exhaust, which is predominately oxygen, flows to the expander. The expander is coupled to the air compressor cathode source (col. 6, line 28 or the flow is used in a reforming process, (col. 6, lines 12-25.) Thus, the heat exchanger receives waste heat of the fuel cell and transfers heat energy from the fuel cell to the cathode exhaust gas flowing through the cathode exhaust gas line. In focusing on the claim language, these teachings anticipate the claimed invention.

The same reasoning is applied to the Cownden reference, which teaches a cathode oxidant exhaust stream that acts as a coolant fluid in several fuel cell system components (see

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col. 17, line 45 to col. 18, line 55.) In col. 18, line 13, the reference refers to the cathode exhaust stream as an indirect heat exchanger. The flow of the exhaust through the exhaust path coupled with the fuel cell forms a heat exchanger. The flow is from the cathode and the flow is directed to a turbine (col. 18, line 37.) Thus, the heat exchanger receives waste heat of the fuel cell and transfers heat energy from the fuel cell to the cathode exhaust gas flowing through the cathode exhaust gas line (col. 17, line 45 to end.) In focusing on the claim language, these teachings anticipate the claimed invention. For these reasons, applicant's arguments are not persuasive.

Examiner Correspondence

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mark Ruthkosky whose telephone number is 571-272-1291. The examiner can normally be reached on FLEX schedule (generally, Monday-Thursday from 9:00-6:30.) If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Ryan can be reached at 571-272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free.)

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Mark Ruthkosky

Primary Patent Examiner

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Mark Ruthkosky
11/5/2006